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ate. These moves followed Mr Gorbachev's meeting in Minsk on July 10th with senior officers from the country's western military districts, including General Zaitsev's command.

Because of the very pace of the changes, it would be surprising if Mr Gorbachev did not meet opposition. Probably because he expected resistance, he decided to strike hard and early. But maybe the resistance is stiffening.

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SOVIET UNION

A Comeback for Ogarkov?

First Mikhail Gorbachev aimed at revitalizing the domestic economy, replacing dozens of party functionaries with men of his own pragmatic ilk. Then he put his stamp on Soviet diplomacy, replacing veteran Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko with a regional reformer with no experience in foreign affairs. Now it may be the turn of the Soviet military. According to rumors circulating in Moscow last week, Gorbachev has rehabilitated Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov—who had slipped into a mysterious political exile last September—appointing him the military commander of the 979,000 troops of the Warsaw Pact.

The Soviets refused to provide any immediate confirmation of Ogarkov's promotion. But according to Western analysts the move made excellent sense. A hard-liner who defended the 1983 downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 to the press, the 67-year-old Ogarkov argues that the Soviet Union must upgrade its conventional forces rather than concentrate most of its attention on nuclear weapons. "His return," says Rand Corp.'s Soviet military analyst Edward L. Warner, "tells us that Gorbachev is willing to go with talented, aggressive people determined to shake up the system and move ahead."

It was that propensity for shaking up the system that apparently led to Ogarkov's downfall last year. At a time when the Kremlin was nervously awaiting the death of Konstantin Chernenko, say Western observers, Ogarkov spoke candidly about what he felt Soviet military priorities should be. He thus ran afoul of the late Defense Minister Dmitry Ustinov, who reportedly

ordered him demoted from his job as chief of the general staff. According to U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency analyst Philip A. Petersen, "Ogarkov was saying: 'The imperialist powers are moving to a new generation of sophisticated weapons. If the Soviet Union is to keep up, we have to make the leap into this new technological age.'" Given the uncertainty about the future Soviet leadership, such outspoken advocacy had to be suppressed.

Blitzkrieg: Western officials in Moscow were astonished at Ogarkov's apparent comeback. But Ogarkov hadn't really fallen that far. He had quietly accepted an assignment to reorganize the Warsaw Pact. The idea was to set up a system for high-speed conventional operations that would prevent a war in Western Europe from going nuclear. The tactics involved concentrating hundreds of thousands of troops into a unified command structure for a blitzkrieg attack through West Germany. The plans did not signal any Soviet decision to get into a war. But according to DIA analyst John Hines, the reorganization was "probably one of the most significant command changes in the Warsaw Pact in over two decades."

As the commander of the largest Soviet military force, Ogarkov may, in practical terms, outrank Marshal Sergei Akhro-



Defending the KAL attack: A hard-liner with new ideas

meyev, a former Ogarkov deputy who serves as chief of the general staff. And in view of the rumored ill health of Defense Minister Sergei Sokolov, 74, there is no telling how far Ogarkov might go. Given the marshal's previous portfolio, says Christopher Donnelly, an expert on the Soviet military at Britain's Sandhurst military academy, the new appointment "is one more step in the total reorganization of Soviet war-fighting capabilities." Ogarkov's obvious ability makes that step a significant challenge to the West.

HARRY ANDERSON with JOHN BARRY in Washington and JOYCE BARNATHAN in Moscow